GRSMMP State Questionnaire

Problems, Opportunities, Priorities, and Sediment Needs Session

1. Considering your existing practices for projects involving restoration, conservation, and environmental protection, what are the primary concerns in your state involving RSM (i.e. wetland loss, beach erosion, habitat restoration, etc.) and how can the GRSMMP improve the planning process?

Responses

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Management Division: All of those mentioned above are of primary concern. You can add subsidence to the list as well. GRSMMP can provide technical data, e.g. source and fate of sediments, as well as acting as a conduit to get agency processes changed to encourage a "larger picture" view of the regulatory and other agency responsibilities for large public works projects of the need to see and utilize the big picture.

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Engineering Division: Coastal restoration in Louisiana is intended to address the critical issues of wetland loss, beach erosion, habitat restoration etc (**barrier island degradation** may be added to the list). In Post Katrina & Rita era, coastal protection has been integrated to coastal restoration. This has caused a quantum leap in the sediment need both qualitatively and quantitatively. Previously our need was confined to sand for Gulf-side beach restoration and mixed sediment for bayside marsh restoration of barrier islands and clayey sediment for inland marsh creation. Now various types of sediment are needed for levee construction.

Realizing that sediment is key to restoration and its cost, GRSMMP can aid in planning process by adding regional perspective to the restoration and protection transcending the political boundaries in sediment distribution and occurrences.

Alabama DCNR, State Lands Division:
A. Proper sediment bypassing at all Gulf of Mexico navigation projects.
B. Beneficial use of dredged materials for wetlands and shoreline restoration.
C. Adequate upland disposal areas to store future dredged materials.
D. Coordination of dredging and restoration projects to insure maximum beneficial use with limited delta cost expenditures.

The GRSMMP can serve as a tool to identify existing dredging projects, identify issues associated with those projects, identify beneficial use opportunities, and make policy, regulatory and funding recommendations to insure full benefits of the RSM concept are realized.

2. What do you perceive to be the key problems and issues that impede regional sediment management in your state and where should efforts be concentrated to support the regional management approach? Are their issues involving regional sediment management across political boundaries?

Responses

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Management Division: Money, myopic agency views, money, myopic agency views, money, myopic agency views and a "do not give a hoot" attitude and inertia toward inaction. Efforts should be concentrated on the entity that currently moves, by far the vast majority of the sediment that is moved and that is the O&M arm of the various COE districts. No one moves more sediment than they do. Yes there are, including an inability of the COE to recognize and internally deal w/ a "big picture" that does not match their established practices. The budgetary process of the O&M folks which pits all ports/channels against each other for dwindling appropriations as their needs become greater and our realizations of the real impacts of navigation channels on our coastal resources become more apparent. This is also true about the need to protect eroding shorelines. Nationally people move to the shore and if politicians are not going to have the courage to try and manage this movement to lessen impacts then we need to find ways to keep the shoreline from moving.

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Engineering Division: The key problems are
1) Lack of coordination between various agencies working for the same cause
2) Lack of relevant data especially about the sediment
3) Lack of point of contact for sediment information in various agencies
4) Absence of a Regional Sediment Plan acceptable to all the agencies
5) And absence of a policy for implementing the Regional Sediment Management Plan

Alabama DCNR, State Lands Division:
A. Lack of coordination between dredging projects and those conducting projects where materials can be used beneficially.
B.Inadequate funding of the Section 204 and 206 programs.
C.Timeliness of the Section 204-206 project process.
D. Timing issues: we have sediment but no place to use it, we have a project permitted a/or funded but no sediment available.
E. Delta cost and non-federal partner match availability.
F. "Federal Standard" requirement for least cost alternative for disposal hampers innovation by project managers & cooperation with non-federal partners.

3. What are the regulatory, policy, and funding constraints that impede regional restoration efforts and sediment management in your area of interest?

Responses

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Management Division: It is not so much about constraints as it is a case of will and leadership or of some agencies wearing blinders and/or not willing to try and deal with the situation as it exists and looking for answers in the big picture. We need some real leadership and we need for the general public to understand what we want to achieve so that the politicians will get the message from their constituents that they demand that these issues be dealt with.

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Engineering Division: In coastal restoration sediment is a primary factor for the success of the project still there is no policy which could regulate the sediment management plan once it is drawn

Alabama DCNR, State Lands Division: See above.

4. How important is the establishment of a sediment budget in understanding the sediment processes in relation to managing and planning projects? What do you perceive your sediments needs to be in the near term (10 years) and longer term (50 years) and what sediment type is most desirable?

Responses:

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Management Division: The value of information regarding the sediment budget cannot be overstated. W/out the sediment budget we cannot adequately or intelligently plan projects or outcomes. We also however need to know the engineering and technology involved w/ moving sediments every bit as well. The value of this information cannot be overstated either. W/out the technological knowledge about moving and placing sediments all of the sediments and sediment budgets in the world would be of no use to you.

Louisiana will probably need in excess of 100 million cubic yards in the near term.

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Engineering Division:
1) The sediment budget is calculated on both regional and project basis to comprehend the sediment movement both on regional and on project level. Though ERDC has prepared regional sediment budget for Texas and Mississippi, regional sediment budget for Louisiana was not prepared. Louisiana appears to be more complicated, Absence of such budget deprives the projects with a regional picture of sediment movement.
2) Sediment budget also involves sediment inventories. Some effort has been undertaken by the State in form of GIS database (Louisiana Sand Resources Database - LASARD).
3) There are no firm estimates as more and more restoration projects are been added and also there is no estimate available for requirement of sand for levee construction for coastal protection. A tentative estimate would be about 50 million cubic yard of **sand** for the near-term projects of which 15 million cubic yard would come from OCS. There is no estimate available for mixed sediment or sediment for inland marshes.
4) Sand and the most desirable sediment type and is the scarce in the deltaic regime. It is generally needed for Gulf-side beach restoration for barrier islands and may be for construction of core of the levee

Alabama DCNR, State Lands Division: I am not sure that a sediment budget is needed. Funding for Section 204/206 and other sources seems to drive beneficial use more than the projected availability of sediments (except for beach nourishment). We don't have a shortage of sediment, we just never seem to have it in the right place at the right time for the right project.
Sediment needs have not been projected and it may not be feasible to project needs.
Sediment type needed includes beach quality sands and sediments of mixed composition needed for wetland restoration.

Direction of GRSMMP Session

1. What actions, as a group, should be taken as a result of this workshop?

Responses

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Management Division: The group should elevate, to the National dredging team, the concept of changing the federal standard/base plan to include beneficial use of the positive side of the scale and encourage divisions/districts to seek capability level funding to achieve this. This should be especially true where major landscape issues are a threat to populations.

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Engineering Division: 1) Aid/Assistance in developing regional sediment budget and in preparation of sediment inventories.
2) Keeping track of dredging and its beneficiary use will be an immense task.

Alabama DCNR, State Lands Division:
A. Produce a GRSMMP which includes:

- Description of navigation projects around the Gulf and their rough statistics
- Outline of disposal issues and beneficial use issues
- Outline of existing authorities & funding mechanisms which can promote beneficial use.
- Policy, regulatory and funding recommendations for the Alliance to present to our respective governors & legislatures for action.

2. What are your recommendations to establish key steps to advance the implementation of the GRSMMP? How should we move forward and promote the recommendations that will come out of the GRSMMP?

Responses

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Management Division: We should write a white paper that details a plan to "re-frame" the issue of the federal standard/base plan and how it is implemented. We should "shop" that plan to agency representatives, environmental groups, restoration planning groups, and engineering groups (eg ASCE) to get support. I was reminded that the House version of the WRDA bill, includes provisions for the improvement of the Army Corps' planning and project development process, including independent peer review of larger and more controversial studies and direction to the Corps to revise the Principles and Guidelines. Changing the priority of BU and RSM by putting it in the revised Corps P & G would be far stronger than taking the issue to the NDT and might be something to consider among the States.

Elevate the discussion to the National Dredge Team. This is the group to start with but we must press all interested/involved agencies and institutions.

Louisiana DNR, Coastal Engineering Division: Let us focus on the "sediment budget and inventories" in the initial phase and then try to implement a Regional Sediment Management Plan.

Alabama DCNR, State Lands Division: We should continue to meet/hold conference calls to work through key issues. Future calls/meetings should concentrate on particular issues so that we can start to further develop the body of the Plan. Questionnaires like this one are helpful in learning about the issues facing each state.

We should continue to work on drafting the plan. Once it is drafted and approved by the States, the appropriate state leads will need to forward the Plan to their respective elected officials. Additionally, other entities, such as the Alliance Education & Outreach workgroup, involved NGOs, the NERRs, NEPs, and local sponsors should be recruited to promote the recommendation of the group. We should also follow up with a revision of the plan as needed, to documents progress.